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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS CONVERTING FISH SCALES INTO ANIMAL FOOD

Contrary to general opinion fish scales are digestible and the Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking the best ways to make the high protein content of this waste available for animal food, John L. Farley, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior said today.

Two research studies on utilization of fish scales are in process. One, at the Fishery Technological Laboratory at College Park, Maryland, has already proved that dried ground pollack scales, are readily digested by rats used as experimental animals.

The second stage, now in progress, will involve experimentation to determine the composition of a diet designed to utilize fully the nutritive value of the scales. The second study, being conducted at the University of Massachusetts, involves modification of the scales by chemical treatment before feeding them to rats and chickens. The work in Massachusetts is being done under a Saltonstall-Kennedy Act contract.

Experimentation was started to find a way to utilize profitably fish scales which for many years have been nothing more than a troublesome waste material.

There has been a market for certain types of fish scales for some years, but the market demand and the supply have failed to coincide in most instances. Some years ago it was learned that fish scales could be used to make foam-firefighting material. Lack of an available supply of suitable fish scales forced the makers of firefoam to seek other material for their operations. The iridescent matter on fish scales, known as pearl essence, is also used in making jewelry and certain lustrous paint but the scales of only one or two species of fish are all that have been successfully used in this work.

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